GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:647
ANSWERED ON:24.07.2003
IMPORT OF SET TOP BOX
A.K. PREMAJAM;BHASKAR RAO PATIL;CHANDRA NATH SINGH;CHARAN DAS MAHANT;GADDE RAMAMOHAN;HANNAN MOLLAH;KAMAL NATH;SADASHIVRAO DADOBA MANDLIK;SUNIL KHAN

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to impsoe Conditional Access System (CAS) in connivance withsome Set Top Boxes manufacturing Companies;

(b) if so, whether the Government have finalized a deal with a London-based business magnate;

(c) if so, the facts in this regard;

(d) whether the import duty on STBs have been reduced from 46% to 5%.

(e) if so, the justification thereof;

(f) whether the Government are aware that the digital STBs (MPEG-2) proposed to be imported, aretechnologically an outdated one; and

(g) if so, the reasons for insisting to import the outdated MPEG-2 STBs instead of encouraging indigenouscompanies to manufacture STBs with fibre cables of providing MPEG-4 technology?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (c): The implementation of CASwas considered only in consumer interest. The representatives of Consumer Electronics and Television Manufacturers` Association (CETMA), who represented the indigenous industry, were consulted at different times.

(d) & (e): CETMA and some manufacturers hadmade an appeal for reduction of customs duty on the import of components, required for manufacture of Set Top Boxes (STBs).The import duty on components was rationalised by the Government to give a boost to the indigenous industry, for manufacturing STBs. Thereduction of Customs duty on STBs was proposed in order to make the STBs affordable to the consumers. The reduction of the customs duty on import of STBs is valid up to 31st July, 2003.

(f) & (g): For Commercial Digital Television broadcasting, worldwide, the compression standard used is MPEG-2 for all delivery platforms i.e. satellite, cable and terrestrial, while MPEG-4 is not usedfor commercial television broadcast. BIS has adopted international cable TV standards known as DVB-C and DVB-CSA which is based on MPEG-2 technology.This is widely in use and is not outdated.